

OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO YOU.

The coming meeting of the State Society at the Potter Hotel, Santa Barbara, April 14, 15 and 16, will be in many ways the most important session ever held. Problems of the widest range and of the deepest importance of any ever confronting us, will come up for discussion and for action. And we must meet them and settle them in some way; the duty cannot be shirked or put over and a general line of policy must be adopted which can be followed by the Council and the officers in their conduct of the work during the year. Every delegate should attend, even if at some personal sacrifice of time and money on his part, and every county unit should see to it that delegates are elected who will surely attend the meeting and transact the work which will be presented. It is not fair for a county to fail of representation and then kick at what may be done; the time to kick is right there at the meeting of the House of Delegates and possibly the delegate from the smallest unit may have just the right suggestion to make in regard to some pending matter. Certainly he should be there and express his views. This is no time in which to think of personal jealousies or little differences of opinion; changes have come and great changes are coming within the next few years and we must recognize that fact and meet the changes that are here and get ready for those that will be with us before we know it. "Time flies" and a few years pass before one hardly knows that they have come and gone and left their altered problems and relations and conditions behind them. How long it will be before we have state health insurance, just as we now have state accident insurance, one cannot say; but it is certainly coming and whatever plan we determine upon now for the state problem that is already with us will serve as a basis, in all probability, for the working out of the other problem when it, in its turn, comes to us. And it does no good at all merely to complain bitterly of the faults that are to be found in the present law or those which may be seen in what is to be; we are dealing with actual conditions and not with "if's" and "but's" and all that sort of thing; there is no time to waste on that kind of talk; put it out of your head and see if you can think of some better way of dealing with the actual situation which confronts you and all of us. There is every reason to believe that we can work these things out so as to do justice to everybody concerned; but we cannot do it if you just sit back and kick at what is.

OUR ONLY HOPE.

The only hope for holding up the medical profession and medical conditions in this state to-day, is in holding up and increasing the strength of the State Medical Society. As the JOURNAL said two or three years ago, the time will come (it has

almost come now) when membership in the State Society will have to take the place of the official license to practice. A number of physicians have been licensed under this new law who could never in a thousand years have received a license under the old law. No county society should elect anyone to membership without first referring the name to the State Society office for investigation and report; a large number of incompetent physicians are coming into this state and the number is going to steadily increase. If it were not for the organization of the State Society, everything medical in California would be chaos, right now; as it is, we are going to come out of the present confusion with a fairly well defined and satisfactory arrangement. This is no time for fights amongst ourselves; this is just the time when we need to make our organization stronger and more closely knit and stand together solidly, acting as a unit in all matters and moving slowly and with careful and deliberate caution. If we do this, we can do the very most good for the people of our state and for our professional standing in the community.

MEDICAL DEFENSE.

We must recognize the fact and be prepared for it, that the number of suits for alleged malpractice will increase very largely in the near future—in fact is already on the increase. There are a number of reasons why this should be so. More people who are hurt will be treated by physicians; the injured person may not sue the employer and so many unscrupulous lawyers will be deprived of these "contingent fee" cases. There is left only one person who may be sued—the physician; and the same sort of cheap and scaly lawyer who would incite the patient to sue the employer, will turn his attention to starting a suit against the doctor. We do not fear the losing of any of these suits, for if such should be the case in the trial court, the result would undoubtedly be upset on appeal. But the volume of the work will greatly increase and consequently the cost of it. Experience has shown that the State Society defense is very much better than that of any insurance company—and furthermore, the State Society does not try to get out of defending an action by means of some minor technicality; the policy of the Council and its attorney, has been and is, to play the game with honest and fair liberality and they think that is the way the entire membership desires that it be done. No matter whether you are treating a patient for yourself or for some company or for the state, in every case of a fractured bone or where it is possible there may be a fracture, *insist that an X-ray plate be made and be sure that you keep it safely in your possession*; our Society would be four or five thousand dollars richer to-day, if this had been done in every case during the last few years. If the company does not want to go to the expense of an X-ray, tell them to *get some physician who is not a member of the society*, and thus protect yourself and your organization as well.